

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 17, 2004. Claims 3, 4, 11, and 12 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 5, and 10 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 3, 4, 11, and 12 been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claim 11 is in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claim 11 includes allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in proper independent form. Claim 11 has been so rewritten and is now allowable, along with dependent Claims 3, 4, and 12, which have been amended to depend from Claim 11.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3-5, 10, 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent No. 0920999 (Imanaka et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,550,327 (Miyakawa) and European Patent No. 0569201 A1 (Ohshima et al.). The amendment of the claims as discussed above renders this rejection moot.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed to place this application in condition for allowance and, therefore, its entry is believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Action, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and the allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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